

The Family in Medical Practice, edited by Michael A. Crouch and Leonard Roberts. Pp. xiv+256, illustrated. Springer-Verlag, New York, Berlin, Heidelberg, London, Paris, Tokyo, 1987. DM 65.

The ten contributors are from American academic departments of family medicine, and their message is intended for students and teachers and established practitioners, whether medical or paramedical, who want to help people by using the family-oriented approach. Different chapters feature the 'family systems theory'. There is a useful glossary of terms, and several cartoons and diagrams, including rather complicated 'genograms' (family trees, to us).

Many of the useful ideas will already be familiar to those who know about Balint teaching. For instance, allowing patients to express themselves instead of asking them one question after another; trying to discover what they are wanting to convey rather than attempting to fit them into a series of labelled packages; and above all, letting them feel they are being listened to, even if not wholly understood.

But this is patient-orientated medicine: employing the doctor-patient relationship and treating each patient as a unique individual, not as a member of a particular family. Of course, recalling one's family interactions and understanding the way we were brought up can throw a lot of light on our current behaviour. The question is, can explaining it alter such behaviour once it is established?

The authors believe so. They feel that the importance of the family has been underestimated in medicine, and that a better appreciation of its relevance could supply doctors with a much wider choice of ways to manage their patients. The quoted case histories do come over as very real. What is less certain are the educational and therapeutic implications. However, this is a comprehensive survey of a most interesting topic, and well worth studying.

J.S. Norell
58 Roman Way,
London N7 8XF.

Internal Medicine, 2nd ed., edited by Jay H. Stein. Pp. xlvii+2338, index 78, illustrated. Little Brown & Co., Boston, Toronto, 1987. £35.

With the publication of a second edition Stein's *Internal Medicine* is well and truly established in the top league of encyclopaedic general textbooks. It certainly bears comparison with its longer established rivals. The format of the first edition is largely unchanged with each organ system covered by chapters dealing with basic physiology, laboratory tests, the differential diagnosis of relevant presenting clinical syndromes and, lastly, specific disease entities. The plan was to devote space as the importance of the subject demands, and this seems to have been achieved. This edition has brought all areas up to date with a large number of entirely new chapters.

The colour reproductions are of high quality and

together with an attractive layout and liberal use of tables, line drawings and black and white reproductions make it a pleasant book to use.

The good reference book answers the questions people ask. 'Stein' is just that and can be recommended for the bookshelves of physicians, medical libraries and editors of general medical journals.

B.I. Hoffbrand
Editor, *Postgraduate Medical Journal*

The International Textbook of Cardiology, edited by Tsung O. Cheng. Pp. xxiv+1299, illustrated. Pergamon Press, Oxford, 1987. \$87.50.

This bulky text book of cardiology amounting to some 1,296 pages means that its flimsy paper back cover becomes almost inadequate after the first or second reading. It is edited by Dr Cheng, who is Professor of Medicine at the George Washington University, but was born in Shanghai. Of the 136 contributors to this book, over 20 are based in China and only one comes from Britain. In consequence this textbook of cardiology has an unusual flavour, particularly biased to the Far Eastern approach to cardiology.

In the early section on epidemiology and prevalence of heart disease, there is a most interesting figure of severe atherosclerotic occlusive disease in the left coronary artery of a 50 year old Chinese woman who died of acute myocardial infarction over 2,100 years ago. This therefore considerably precedes many of the more conventionally recognised early reports of ischaemic heart disease. Because of the multiple authorship from different parts of the world, some of the more growing points of cardiology are necessarily dated by the time of this publication. For instance, the chapter on thrombolytic therapy written by Dr Chazov from Russia, reported to have been first to have administered such therapy in the world, is considerably out of date, bearing in mind the more recent trials and newer agents now employed.

The section on angioplasty also has become dated in publication delay. Many of the other sections are written by well established American experts and the well informed cardiologist will most likely be conversant with their opinions.

There are unique sections in this text book, namely those on anaesthesia and heart surgery where there is a chapter on the 'Physiologic and neurochemical basis of acupuncture', and 'Analgesia and cardiac surgery under acupuncture anaesthesia' with illustrations of this technique.

There were interesting sections on 'Cardiovascular nursing', 'New cardiovascular drug development' and 'Medical communications in cardiology' which are not usually seen in a standard textbook of cardiology.

I found this an interesting, international textbook of cardiology which should stimulate the expert cardiologist into the view points of his colleagues trained in the Far East. However, if one was to recommend this as a standard textbook of cardiology for the cardiologist in

training it would not come top of the list and is somewhat outdated compared to the current monographs available. If it is to become a favourite in the bookshelves of libraries or cardiologists, I would feel it would have to go on to a hardback edition.

D.J. Coltart
47 Weymouth Street
London W1N 3LD.

A.G. White
Royal Free Hospital,
London NW3 2QG.

The Paralysed Hand, edited by Douglas W. Lamb. **The Hand and Upper Limb. Vol. 2.** Pp. v+251, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1987. £42.00.

The title of this beautifully produced volume suggests a much more limited subject matter than that which it contains and in this as in other respects it somewhat resembles *Rehabilitation of the Hand* by Wynn Parry although written from a more surgical viewpoint as is appropriate. The first section on aetiology and investigation includes a lucid account of the peripheral nerves of the upper limb, an excellent short account of clinical examination in which the author commends two-point discrimination with a bent paper-clip as being so very much better than leaving it out of the assessment and, to end the section, an account of the pathology and neurophysiological assessment of nerve compression which is an improvement on many longer accounts of electrodiagnosis in hand disorders. There is good coverage of the congenital anomalies of innervation and of the elucidation problems related to the level of compression of the nerve along its course in the arm. Some of the many predisposing medical conditions are listed.

The second section has a wide scope – dealing with peripheral nerve repair, function after replantation and toe transplantation, traumatic and obstetrical brachial plexus injury and for good measure the hand in leprosy, tetraplegia and cerebral palsy. The section on entrapment neuropathy whilst excellent would have been better placed with the section on electrodiagnosis.

The separate section devoted to biomechanics of tendon transfer is fascinating and shows what can be achieved with really well-thought-out line drawings which are numerous throughout the book but particularly good in this chapter.

The fourth section on management of pain spreads its net well beyond the book's title and some rheumatologists would take issue with the advice on the painful rheumatoid hand. In the treatment of reflex sympathetic dystrophy whilst many less commonly used therapies are described the early use of calcitonin is not considered, reflecting perhaps UK practice which contrasts with that in France where its use began. The final section on the role for the hand therapist provides a well balanced and critical account of physical therapy and splintage and reminds us of the value of patient and skilled rehabilitation.

This is a first-rate book which should be in easy reach of every orthopaedic and rheumatology library – and in

the personal possession of its wealthier staff. Those involved in teaching medical and physiotherapy students and those studying for postgraduate rehabilitation diplomas or degrees should read it right through.

Pharmacology and Clinical Uses of Inhibitors of Hormone Secretion and Action, edited by B.J.A. Furr and A.E. Wakeling. Pp. viii+598, illustrated. Baillière Tindall, London, Philadelphia, Toronto, Mexico City, Sydney, Tokyo, Hong Kong, 1987. £39.50.

The development of novel pharmacological compounds based on a detailed knowledge of hormones, both steroid and peptide, and their receptors, has resulted in many advances in the treatment of both endocrine disorders and hormonally responsive non-endocrine disorders. This trend is likely to continue with the rapid advances being made in characterising the structure of receptors for many biologically active factors and this book provides a comprehensive review of current knowledge of antihormonal drugs and inhibitors of hormone secretion. The editors have managed to assemble a number of excellent chapters written by a group of authors of international repute. I particularly enjoyed the clear and comprehensive accounts of the antioestrogens. It is rather an unusual way of approaching hormonal therapy and on balance succeeds, but I suspect makes for a rather restricted readership. As the editors state in their preface they have tried to avoid compartmentalisation and thus the book becomes a valuable reference work for prospective research students and fellows. This makes referencing extremely important and this has been successfully achieved with many 1985 and some 1986 references in most chapters. Sections on the clinical application of the compounds of interest are less cohesive. This is probably unavoidable when one considers the wide potential applications of a compound like somatostatin, for example in acromegaly, diabetes, gastrointestinal tumours, or the proven applications for antiandrogen compounds such as alopecia, acne, hirsutism, precocious puberty and carcinoma of the prostate; these are likely to be used by a variety of clinicians including dermatologists, endocrinologists, paediatricians and urologists.

In summary a very well presented book written by experts but perhaps for use predominantly by experts.

Professor M.C. Sheppard
Queen Elizabeth Hospital,
Birmingham B15 2TH.